

**Statement on the Senate Vote To
Reduce Entitlement Spending**

December 21, 2005

The Senate vote to reduce entitlement spending is a victory for taxpayers, fiscal restraint, and responsible budgeting, and it will help keep us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. I applaud the Republicans in the House and Senate who supported the legislation. This will be the first time in nearly a decade that Congress has reduced entitlement spending. This strong bill demonstrates our commitment to funding our Nation's priorities and ensuring that taxpayer money is spent wisely.

**Remarks on Departure for Camp
David, Maryland**

December 22, 2005

I hope you all have a happy holiday. This has been a year of strong progress toward a freer, more peaceful world and a prosperous America. We had three sets of elections in Iraq. This is an amazing moment in the history of liberty. A new Parliament has been seated in Afghanistan. Our economy is strong and getting stronger. People are working. We've added 4.5 million new jobs since April of 2003. Productivity is up. Small businesses are flourishing. Homeownership is high. It's been a good year for the American people.

We've got a lot of work to do. Yesterday and during this past week, the Congress acted in a wise way with the taxpayers' money, fiscally responsible set of appropriations bills that were passed that funded important priorities, key priorities—to make sure our troops have what they need to do their job. The DOD bill did just that. Another key priority is to make sure the people in the gulf coast of our country get the help they need to help rebuild New Orleans and the Mississippi gulf coast. And there is a good deal of money available for those who suffered from Katrina and Rita.

It appears to me that the Congress understands we've got to keep the PATRIOT Act in place, that we're still under threat. There's still an enemy that wants to harm us, and

they understand the PATRIOT Act is an important tool for those of us here in the executive branch to use to protect our fellow citizens. The Senate extended the PATRIOT Act by 6 months.

As we head into the holiday season, I do want to say to the families of those who have got a loved one deployed overseas, we stand with you, and we pray with you for the safety of your loved one. We want to send our greetings to your loved one overseas and tell him how much we appreciate you serving for the cause of freedom and peace.

Anyway, I hope you all have a great holiday. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on Congressional Action
Funding the Armed Forces for the
War on Terror in Iraq, Afghanistan,
and Elsewhere**

December 22, 2005

I applaud the Congress for passing legislation to fund our troops who are fighting the war on terror in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. This funding will help us continue to hunt down the terrorists, pursue our strategy for victory in Iraq, and make America more secure. I look forward to signing the bill into law.

**Statement on Congressional Action
To Reauthorize the PATRIOT Act**

December 22, 2005

I appreciate the strong commitment by the majority of the House and of the Senate to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act. The terrorists are determined to strike America again and inflict even greater damage than they did on September 11, 2001. The PATRIOT Act is essential to protecting the American people against the terrorists. The Act tore down the wall between law enforcement and intelligence officials so that they can share information and work together to help prevent

attacks. The Senate Democratic leader boasted last week that the Senate Democrats had “killed the PATRIOT Act.” Our Nation’s security must be above partisan politics. The PATRIOT Act has helped us disrupt terrorist plots and break up cells here in the United States. I will work closely with the House and Senate to make sure that we are not without this crucial law for even a day.

Proclamation 7970—To Take Certain Actions Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act

December 22, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Section 506A(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 (the “1974 Act”) (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(1)), as added by section 111(a) of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (title I of Public Law 106–200) (AGOA), authorizes the President to designate a country listed in section 107 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3706) as a “beneficiary sub-Saharan African country” if the President determines that the country meets the eligibility requirements set forth in section 104 of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3703), as well as the eligibility criteria set forth in section 502 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2462).

2. Section 104 of the AGOA authorizes the President to designate a country listed in section 107 of the AGOA as an “eligible sub-Saharan African country” if the President determines that the country meets certain eligibility requirements.

3. Section 112(b)(3)(B) of the AGOA (19 U.S.C. 3721(b)(3)(B)) provides special rules for certain apparel articles imported from “lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries.”

4. In Proclamation 7350 of October 2, 2000, the President designated the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (Mauritania) as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country pursuant to section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act and provided that it would be considered a lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan Af-

rican country for purposes of section 112(b)(3)(B) of the AGOA.

5. Section 506A(a)(3) of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2466a(a)(3)) authorizes the President to terminate the designation of a country as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country for purposes of section 506A if he determines that the country is not making continual progress in meeting the requirements described in section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act.

6. Pursuant to section 104 of the AGOA and section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that the Republic of Burundi (Burundi) meets the eligibility requirements set forth or referenced therein, and I have decided to designate Burundi as an eligible sub-Saharan African country and as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country.

7. I further determine that Burundi satisfies the criterion for treatment as a “lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan African country” under section 112(b)(3)(B) of the AGOA.

8. Pursuant to section 506A(a)(3) of the 1974 Act, I have determined that Mauritania is not making continual progress in meeting the requirements described in section 506A(a)(1) of the 1974 Act. Accordingly, I have decided to terminate the designation of Mauritania as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country for purposes of section 506A of the 1974 Act, effective on January 1, 2006.

9. Section 604 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2483), as amended, authorizes the President to embody in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States the substance of relevant provisions of that Act, or other acts affecting import treatment, and of actions taken thereunder.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including but not limited to section 104 of the AGOA and sections 506A and 604 of the 1974 Act, do proclaim that:

(1) Burundi is designated as an eligible sub-Saharan African country and as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country.

(2) In order to reflect this designation in the HTS, general note 16(a) to the HTS is